



Tapestry Loom

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TOOLS:

- [Bench vise \(1\)](#)
- [Drill \(1\)](#)
- [Drill bits \(1\)](#)
- [Pliers \(1\)](#)
- [Saw \(1\)](#)
Small saw for cutting dowel rods.
- [X-Acto knife \(1\)](#)

PARTS:

- [Stretcher bars \(4\)](#)
Uni-Stretch embroidery frame stretcher bars (2 pairs) sizes 22" and 18" available at Michaels. You can also use canvas stretcher bars in the same sizes, available at your local art store; just make sure to pick up 2 of each size.
- [Dowel \(2\)](#)
1/2"x36".
- [Screw hooks \(4\)](#)
- [Wood glue \(1\)](#)
- [Yarn \(100yds\)](#)
size #10 works well. Warping yarns have to be of a particularly hardy breed. A good test is to hold a length of yarn in your hands and pull; if it holds, then it should be just fine. You want something that will make your hands hurt when you try to break it.
- [Yarn \(20yds\)](#)
in contrasting color.

- [Cardboard \(2\)](#)

- [Paper \(1\)](#)

SUMMARY

I have wanted to weave since I can remember, but I always thought it was impossible because of space constraints. Then I got my hands on a tapestry loom!

With a tapestry loom you're able to weave the full length of warp because it's wrapped around the frame. You actually shift the warp bar, and therefore the warp, around the whole frame. So even though the loom is only 22" tall, you have 40" of workable warp! With the use of 2 heddle bars, it's easy to open up 2 sheds for all sorts of tapestry weaving adventures. The materials cost less than \$20, and it takes about 20 minutes to make the loom's frame and then 2 to 3 hours to warp it.

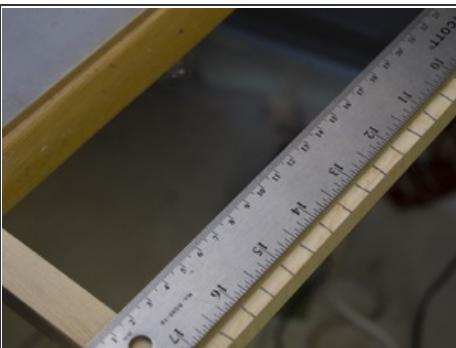
You can make your loom any size. I have looms ranging from 8"×10" to 18"×22"; just remember that if you go larger than that, you need to build your frame from wood that is at least 1"×2½" or the tension of the warps will, well, warp your frame. I have even snapped a few frames, not a fun experience at all.

Step 1 — Build the loom.



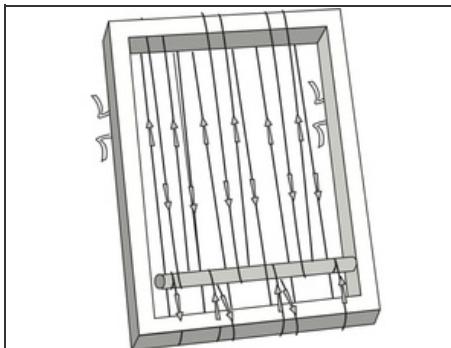
- Fill the joins of your frame with glue and snap them together. This usually requires the gentle nudge of a floor or a rubber mallet.
- On your frame, mark where your 4 screw hooks will go. Mark the 16" and 18" points on the long sides. Drill the 4 holes just deep enough to get the screws started, 1/4" or less.
- Bend your screw hooks over backward. Clamp the screw end into your vise, with the open part of the hook facing toward you. Grab the end of the hook with your pliers and bend it away from you until it is parallel to the floor or as close as you can manage.

Step 2



- Twist the screws into your starter holes.
- Cut your dowel rods by clamping them in your bench vise. You need 2 lengths of 20" and 1 length of 16". The latter is your warp bar; it needs to be able to fit inside your frame.
- Measure out every 1/2" across the top and bot- tom of the front side of your loom. Start by finding the center, and mark every 1/2", working your way to the outside of the frame. Make sure you mark the center so that it stands out a bit.
- Make notches at every 1/2" mark, using your X-Acto knife; just score the frame lightly.
- The front of your loom is the side with the modified screw/hooks in it.

Step 3 — Warp your loom.



- Tie temporary supports to your 16" warping bar, the bar that shifts your work around the frame. This bar needs to be positioned in the bottom quarter of your frame. Secure the warp bar by tying yarn to both ends and then to the top of your frame. Repeat, this time tying the bar ends to the bottom of your frame. Adjust the temporary supports until the bar is parallel to the frame and is held tight.
- When planning your project, you may only want an 8"-wide piece. Measure 4" to either side of your center point so it will be nice and even. I went for the full 16" this time around. Remember, though, that the wider the piece, the longer it will take to warp.
- Tie 1 end of your warp to the left side of the warp bar, where your piece will start. For an 8" wide piece, you would tie it 4" to the left of the center point of your warping bar. You'll also want to think about how many warps per inch you want. For our project we'll use 10 epi (ends per inch). We marked off every 1/2" with a score mark, so we just need to make sure we get 1 warp into each score and 4 in between.
- For the warping pattern, you need to go down and around the bottom of the loom from back to front, up and over the top on the front side, down and around the bar on the back side, up and over the top on the back side to the front, around the bottom to the back, around the bar, and repeat from the beginning until you have the right amount of warps. Just tie off your warp end to the bar. If you're a visual learner, this diagram with fancy arrows will totally help.
- Here is my warping in progress, about 4" into the 16".

Step 4 — Make the heddles.



- First you need to make sure your warps aren't crossed. The best way to do this is to weave one of your cardboard lengths through the warps by picking up every other warp. Then pick up the remaining warps with the second piece of cardboard.
- It's clear when the warps aren't lining up correctly and you need to re-pick some warps so they're in the proper order. If a warp crosses, it's much easier to fix now than later.
- Place a 20" dowel rod into the lower pair of screw hooks and tape it in place. This is your bottom heddle bar. Using your cardboard as a guide, slip the leftover 16" dowel into one set of alternating warps. This is your shed or pick-up stick. Scoot it so it's directly below the bottom heddle bar.
- Tie the end of your yarn to the bottom heddle bar and start looping the warps to the bar. Bring the yarn under the warp, over the bar, and back under the bar, through the loop you just created, and down to catch the next warp. Continue until you have picked up all the warps, and tie the end of the yarn to the heddle bar.
- Repeat for the second, top heddle bar and the other set of alternating warps. Now you're ready to start weaving!

This project first appeared in [CRAFT Volume 08](#), pages 58-61.

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